

United States Senate

WASHINGTON, DC 20510

December 17, 2010

The Honorable Harry Reid
Majority Leader
United States Senate
S-221 United States Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

The Honorable Mitch McConnell
Minority Leader
United States Senate
S-230 United States Capitol
Washington, DC 20510

Dear Majority Leader Reid and Minority Leader McConnell:

We write to request that you extend funding for the Low Income Home Energy Assistance Program (LIHEAP) through September 30, 2011, in any short-term Continuing Resolution (CR).

As you know, the LIHEAP program provides critical heating and cooling assistance for low-income households. Although a short-term CR would fund LIHEAP at last year's level of \$5.1 billion, given the uncertainty of final Fiscal Year 2011 (FY11) funding, the Department of Health and Human Services (HHS) may again provide state funding allocations based on significantly lower levels during the coldest months of the year. This would be consistent with the October 28 release of LIHEAP funding, which was based upon \$2.71 billion in total block grant funding, roughly a cut of 40 percent from last year's levels.

This result would be devastating for our states during a brutal cold period. Compounding the situation is the increased cost of home heating oil, which is roughly 12 percent higher than last year. Again, given the unique structure of the program, unless we finalize funding for the remainder of Fiscal Year 2011 now, the millions of Americans who need help paying their energy bills this winter could see no additional assistance. As such, we would request that you extend LIHEAP's funding through September 30, 2011, at last year's funding levels, in any short-term CR. This would provide stability to the program and allow HHS to allocate LIHEAP funds in a timely manner to provide vital heating assistance this winter.

Again, we want to thank you for your commitment to helping low-income families cope during this tough economic climate, and look forward to working together in a fiscally responsible manner to address this serious issue.

Sincerely,

Jack Reed

Olympia J. Snowe

Sherrod Brown

Susan M. Collins

Patrick J. Leahy

Lisa Murkowski

Barbara A. Mikulski

Scott P. Brown

Herb Kohl

Jeff Bingaman

Patty Murray

Frank R. Lautenberg

Tim Johnson

Mary L. Landrieu

Christopher J. Dodd

Bernard Sanders

Jeanne Shaheen

Charles E. Schumer

Joseph I. Lieberman

Kirsten E. Gillibrand

John F. Kerry

Sheldon Whitehouse

Ron Wyden

Jeff Merkley

Robert P. Casey, Jr.

Robert Menendez

Maria Cantwell

Al Franken

Michael F. Bennet

Debbie Stabenow

Mark Begich

Jim Webb

Jon Tester

Amy Klobuchar
